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## Jesus' Mother and the Bestowal of the Spirit.

S. C. Boguslawski, O.P.

The crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus constitute part of the largest body of consecutive parallel narrative material in each of the four gospels. The elaborate drama is immediately prefaced in the Fourth Gospel (as in the Synoptics) by the arrest and trial of Jesus (18:1-19:16). The Johannine Passion narrative, commencing with the Passover meal (ch. 13), culminates when Jesus is glorified at the moment of death on the cross: "...he bowed his head and παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα." (19:30) The moment of apparent defeat is rather the time of triumph: "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee...." (17:1) Verses 19:28-30 constitute the apex of the Passion, and give intelligibility to the preceding unique Johannine pericope 19:25-27. Jesus completes the Father's work (v. 28); brings the scriptures to fruition (v. 28b) and gives over the Spirit (v. 30)<sup>1</sup> to the newly constituted eschatological community (vv. 25-27) at his death. This pericope succinctly defines the principal christological and soteriological theme of the Gospel (Jesus as fulfiller of the Father's plan of salvation), and provides a theological fundament for Mary's ongoing role in salvation. Here, Mariology and pneumatology fuse.

### Structure: 19:16b-42

There is some agreement among commentators regarding the subsection's structure within the broader Passion narrative.<sup>2</sup> It is:

19:16b-22: The crucifixion of Jesus and Pilate's inscription: Jesus as King

23-24: The division of Jesus' garments: Jesus as fulfiller of prophecy

25-27: Jesus' Mother and the Beloved Disciple: a new relationship

28-30: Jesus' death: the Father's work completed and the bestowal of the Spirit

31-37: Jesus' pierced side: the flow of blood and water confirms the new "ἐκκλησία"

38-42: Jesus' burial: entombment of the King

Brown proposes a subdivision of section one (16-22) into vv. 16b-18 and vv. 19-22 in order to demonstrate a latent chiastic framework within vv. 16b-42, which posits vv. 25-27 as the core of the narrative. Lindars and McPolin similarly delineate the structure, but without positing a chiasmus.<sup>3</sup> Brown's observations appear forced on several points: the introduction and

conclusion are not balanced in the measure of detail, e.g., Jesus' deposition is not mentioned and does not constitute a separate subsection in vv. 38-42; vv. 31-37 are not paralleled by vv. 19-22, but for the mention of Pilate, and the excessive stress upon the significance of vv. 25-27, which designates the pericope as the heart of the chiasmic construct, seems premature when juxtaposed with vv. 28-30, the moment of Jesus' glorification.<sup>4</sup> (The significance of the incident emerges in light of the bestowal of the Spirit, that is, derivatively.) The structure is less complex than Brown's proposed chiasmus.<sup>5</sup>

### Translation:

(19:16b) Then they took Jesus, (17) and bearing the cross for himself he went out to the so-called "Place of the Skull", which in "Hebrew" is called Golgotha. (18) There they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side, and Jesus in the middle. (19) And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross; there was written: "Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews" (20) Many of the Jews read this title because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city: and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, (and) in Greek. (21) Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write 'the king of the Jews', but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" (22) Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

(23) Then the soldiers, when they crucified Jesus took his garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top throughout. (24) So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, rather let us decide by lot to see whose it will be"; that the scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

So the soldiers did this. (25) But standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, and Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (26) Then Jesus, seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, said to this mother, "Woman, behold your son." (27) Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

(28) After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, in order that the scripture be brought to fruition, said, "I thirst." (29) A jar full of sour wine stood there; so they put a sponge full of sour wine on hyssop and brought it to his mouth. (30) When Jesus took the sour wine he said, "It is finished" and bowing his head he gave over the Spirit.



(31) Therefore the Jews, since it was the Preparation Day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath (for great was the day of that sabbath) asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they might be taken away. (32) So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who were crucified with him; (33) but in coming up to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. (34) But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. (35) The one who has seen this has testified, and his testimony is true, and he knows that he speaks the truth, in order that you might believe. (36) For these things came to be in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." (37) And again, another scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."

(38) After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus (but secretly, for fear of the Jews), asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave consent. So he came and took his body. (39) Nicodemus came also, who had come to him first by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. (40) So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linens with spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. (41) In the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. (42) So on account of the Preparation Day of the Jews, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

#### Text Critical Notes:<sup>6</sup>

19:16b: The abruptness of phrasing has prompted scribal attempts to improve this verse by means of additions (cf. Matt 27:31, Luke 23:26). παραλαβοντες ουν τον 'Ιησουν is attested in  $\mathcal{K}^2$  (700) pc<sup>8</sup> and οὐ δε παραλαβοντες, (λαβ- $\mathcal{K}^*$ ) τον 'Ιησουν, (αυτον, f<sup>1,13</sup> 565 al) and και ηγαγον (απηγαγον--A al) in A D<sup>s</sup> O 054 065 Mlat sy; as well as (απηγαγον (+ αυτον  $\mathcal{K}$ ) in P<sup>66vid</sup>  $\mathcal{K}$  N W f<sup>1</sup> 565 al. The text is supported by B L Y 33 pc it bo.

19:20: "Hebrew, Latin, and Greek" is well attested in  $\mathcal{K}^a$  B L N X 33 74 89 90 234 317 483 484 713 945 1321 1346 al e ff<sup>2</sup> co ( $\mathcal{K}^*$  565: h. t.) The order of the three names as "Hebrew, Greek, and Latin" is a secondary development seen in A D<sup>supp</sup> I Y Γ Θ Λ Π and most minuscules of the Old Latin vg. syr<sup>ph</sup>. The languages are arranged in accord with a geographical order (East to West) and gives the place of honour to Latin (last in the series). Scribes of W and 1194 confused the text and produced "Εβραϊστί,

ῥωμοῖσι, ἑβραῖσι".

19:28 K Γ Υ 054 f<sup>13</sup> 28<sup>s</sup> (892<sup>s</sup>) 1010 1424 p<sup>a</sup> bo which are minor witnesses have ἰδὼν (seeing). "Knowing has greatest textual support: K A D<sup>s</sup> L N W Θ f<sup>1</sup> 33 565 700 and 1241.

19:29 Hyssop (ὑσσώπω) is rated "A" by Metzger, finding textual support from P<sup>66vid</sup> K (\*: -του) B L W Y 1 33 565 pc lat sa<sup>ms</sup> as<sup>2</sup> pbo. ὑσσώ appears in 476\* and 1242, perhaps as an attempt to remedy an alleged scribal error in which ὙΣΣΩΠΕΡΙΘΕΝΤΕΣ became ὙΣΣΩΠΩΠΕΡΙΘΕΝΤΕΣ in transcription. This theory has little textual support.

Furthermore, several witnesses (Θ 892 1195 2174 al) read μετὰ χολῆς καὶ ὑσσώπου apparently influenced by Matt 27:34.

19:35: Both πιστευ[σ]ητε (rated "C") and πιστευητε have notable early support. The aorist tense might suggest that the Gospel was addressed to non-Christians that they might be brought to faith; whereas, the present tense might connote the strengthening of the faith of those who already believe. Nestle- Aland 26 brackets the sigma in the main text.

19:39: μίγμα appears in P<sup>66vid</sup> K<sup>c</sup> A Dsupp K L X Y) Π 054 f<sup>1</sup> f<sup>13</sup> 28 33 565 700. Although ἐλιγμα (K\* B W cop<sup>boms</sup>) is the more difficult reading, "mixture" has stronger textual and contextual support. See Notes.

### **The Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics: Sect. 19:16b-42**

The text cited above illustrates marked agreement with the Synoptic accounts with reference to the unfolding of the Passion narrative and regarding specific details. Despite lengthy discourse material placed within the context of the Passover meal, the Fourth Gospel presents the same Passion scenario as the Synoptics: The Passover meal (ch. 13); arrest in the garden (18:1- 11); interrogation by the high priest (18:19); trial before Pilate (18:28) and the crucifixion and burial of Jesus (19:16b-42). Substantial shared facts emerge between John and the Synoptics, especially within this latter segment: the place of crucifixion (see Mark 15:22 and par.); the crucifixion of two men on either side of Jesus (see Mark 15:27 and par.); similar content concerning the inscription, i.e., King of the Jews (see Mark 15:26 and par.); the division of Jesus' garments by the soldiers (see Mark 15:24 and par.); the offer of wine to the Crucified (see Mark 15:36 and par.); an utterance of Jesus prior to his death (see Mark 15:37 and par.) and the necessity of prompt burial (see Mark 15:42



and par.).

However significant differences also emerge between the Synoptic and Johannine gospels. For example, the Johannine Jesus carries his own cross without the aid of Simon of Cyrene (cf. Mark 15:21 and par.); the first offer of wine is absent from John (cf. Mark 15:25 and par.); the mockery of the crowd does not appear (cf. Mark 15:29-32 and par.); time references (cf. Mark 15:25 and par.) are deleted as are extraordinary events, such as the tearing of the Temple veil (cf. Mark 15:38), nor is the centurion's confession of faith (cf. Mark 15:39) included in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>7</sup> Also, vv. 25-27 and 31-37 have no Synoptic parallels, (which would indicate a particular Johannine theological teaching).

The admixture of common and distinctive details is problematic.<sup>8</sup> Johannine parallels with Marcan/Matthean material may be explained by John's dependence upon Mark which he or an intermediate tradition modified drastically,<sup>9</sup> or upon an independent Johannine source which the Evangelist augmented by "creative imagination."<sup>10</sup> The latter alternative would simultaneously account for Johannine-Lucan parallels insofar as John's source was "in many instances close to the special tradition used by Luke."<sup>11</sup> The Evangelist appropriates kerygmatic material which he expands,<sup>12</sup> reorganizes and adapts to this proper theological end, resulting in a masterful weave of Synoptic and Johannine elements. (cf. Acts 10:39)

### Exegetical Notes:

#### sect. 19:16b-22

Jesus commences the trek to his enthronement on the cross. (v 16b) In high relief, and with unnecessary details eliminated, Jesus commands attention. Notably, Jesus bears his cross alone (ἐαυτῷ) and no mention is made of the *via crucis* (Luke 23:27-31). "They" may seem to refer to the soldiers (vv. 31-32), but the preceding referent is the "chief priests" (v. 15). The Evangelist's seeming imprecision reflects late first-century Christianity, which began to "exculpate the Romans and inculcate the Jews."<sup>13</sup> The Evangelist's account eventually acknowledges the historical fact that Jesus was executed at the hands of Roman soldiers, but focuses upon the provocative role of the Jewish officials in the affair. The chief priests and pharisees had earlier sought council regarding Jesus (11:47-53) and conspired with Judas for Jesus' arrest (18:3, 12-14). Caiaphas asserted the expediency that one man die for the people (18:14) and certain of "the Jews" pressed for Jesus' crucifixion (19:12) during his arraignment before Pilate. It is fitting therefore, that Pilate hands Jesus over



"to them", i.e., the Jews, to be crucified.<sup>14</sup>

Jesus (ἐξῆλθεν) "went out" because executions took place outside the city walls (cf. Heb 13:12-13, Acts 7:58). Verse 20 makes this explicit: "...the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city...." The verbal prefixes of parallel Synoptic material indicates the same (ἀπηγορευον, Matt 27:31, Luke 23:26 ἐξάγουσιν, Mark 15:20b). Jesus carries (βαστάζων) the *patibulum* (crossbeam) to the site of execution ἑαυτῷ (v. 17). ἑαυτῷ is a dative of advantage, i.e., for himself.<sup>15</sup> Although Bultmann sees no symbolic intent in this phrase,<sup>16</sup> it would accord well with the Johannine Jesus' voluntary surrender of his life (18:4): Jesus, who knowingly accepted all that would befall him in Jerusalem, now leaves the city carrying the cross for himself to the site of execution.<sup>17</sup>

Jesus' destination is Golgotha, which is the transliteration of the Aramaic *Gulgoltha* (Hebrew, *Gulgolet*). The Hebrew equivalent is translated by κρανίον, as in the LXX (see Judg 9:53; 2 Kgs 9:35). Mark 15:22 and Matt 27:33 read κρανίου, and along with 19:17 supply a translation of the word. The name of the location probably derives from the topography, i.e., a hill with the outline of a skull.

It was at Golgotha that "...they crucified him." (v. 18) Again, the Evangelist's report is very matter-of-fact. He does not dwell on the details of the procedure,<sup>18</sup> because Jesus' crucifixion is the moment of enthronement: the King of the Jews reigns from the cross. (See below, v. 21) He is lifted up in order to "draw all people to [himself]." (12:32) Therefore, the gospel writer omits description of the process and the cursing of Jesus by the crowd (cf. Mark 15:29-32), chief priests, scribes and elders (cf. Matt 27:41-42, Mark 15:31). No intimation that Jesus is accursed by God (cf. Deut 21:22-23) finds expression.

At Golgotha Jesus was crucified between two "others" (ἄλλους δύο). This is a detail which warrants mere mention. There is no dialogue among the three (cf. Luke 23:39-43). Rather, the significant detail is Jesus' placement between the two men because it has a bearing upon the Evangelist's later description of the *crurifragium*, (v. 31) i.e., the breaking of their legs. Mark and Matthew designate the men as λησται (Mark 15:27; Matt 27:38) and Luke as κακοῦργοι (Luke 23:32). However, the Fourth Gospel gives no identifying detail, lest it detract from the focus upon Jesus (here and in vv. 32-33).

Pilate ironically declares Jesus' kingship: "Pilate wrote a title...and put

it on the cross; there was written: 'Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews'" Since the Synoptics record a similar (but not identically worded) inscription, Bultmann attributes v. 19 to the tradition and vv. 20-22 to the Evangelist. His reasons are twofold: vv. 20-22 reassert the theme of Kingship witnessed in 12b, 15c and "οτε ... 'Ιησοφν (v. 23) appears as an interpolation to facilitate the connection with v. 19.<sup>19</sup> The simultaneity of two scenes seems to be an elaboration of the tradition as well, e.g., vv. 17-18 describe Jesus' crucifixion juxtaposed with the simultaneous meeting between Pilate and the chief priests of the Jews (vv. 19-22).<sup>20</sup> Pilate "wrote...and he put [the title] on the cross", that is, in a causative sense (see 19:1, "Pilate scourged...."). Others prepared and affixed the notice. The τίτλος (title) designates Jesus' identity and his crime. The author of the Fourth Gospel alone attributes the inscription to Pilate (cf. Mark 15:26; Matt 27:37; Luke 23:38) and uses the latinism τίτλος (=titulus). Significantly, the Roman Prefect proclaims Jesus' kingship in opposition to the objections by the chief priests of the Jews. (v. 21) "Jesus the Nazorean, King of the Jews" is declared multilingually, in Hebrew (the local language), Latin (the official language) and Greek (the common universal language). Johannine irony is evident. The same authority which yielded to the provocation of the Jews, now manifests Jesus' kingship. And, Pilate resists the chief priests and unwittingly declares the truth: Jesus is King. Perhaps the phrase, "of the Jews", both signifies the Prefect's revenge upon his religious adversaries and reflects the struggles of the first-century Johannine community with the synagogue (see 9:22). "μη γράφε" ("Do not write") clearly expresses the distress which the Jews suffer at the hands of the Roman. They demand that this indignity not continue. The chief priests had earlier admitted: "We have no King but Caesar!" (19:15), but only in order to procure Jesus' condemnation. Now the repugnance evident in 'εκείνος reaffirms Jesus' rejection by the Jews and elicits Pilate's definitive response: "'ο γέγραφα γέγραφα!" (v. 22) The perfect tense connotes his irrevocable decision.

#### sect. 19:23-24

The scene shifts to Golgotha where the soldiers divide Jesus' garments in fulfilment of the scripture ('ινα 'η γραφή πληρωθῇ): "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (Ps 22:19). The Evangelist returns to his source for vv. 23-24.<sup>21</sup> The episode, at the very least, illustrates the fulfilment of prophecy.

The soldiers under Pilate's authority, having completed the task of crucifixion, obtain the perquisites of their labour--Jesus' garments. The soldiers are four in number as τέσσαρα μέρη indicates (v. 23). 'ιμάτια



probably refers to Jesus' outer garments and the χιτῶν to an inner tunic. Needless speculation as to what the articles of clothing might be, diverts attention from the detail which the Evangelist specifically isolates, "καὶ τὸν χιτῶνα".<sup>22</sup>

The symbolic import of the tunic is disputed. Bultmann, Bernard and Schnackenburg reject any symbolic sacerdotal interpretation of the χιτῶν.<sup>23</sup> Rather, the latter prefers to see the surrendering of Jesus' earthly possession and his person (like 13:4) and the simultaneous assurance of God's protection (because the tunic is not destroyed). But the Johannine adaptation of parallel Synoptic material suggests more than dispossession and protection; it identifies Jesus as the fulfiller of prophecy.

The soldiers remark μὴ σχίσωμεν ("Let us not tear it!") but instead agree to cast lots to decide ownership (v. 24). The Evangelist employs λαγχάνειν ("to obtain by lot"), whereas the citation of Ps 22:19 (LXX, 21:19) uses ἔβαλον κλῆρον : "...διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτια μου ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμόν μου ἔβαλον κλῆρον. ."<sup>24</sup> The gospel writer exploits the parallelism: (MT) "*begeed...labūs*" correlates with (LXX) "ἱμάτια ... ἱματισμόν" to denote two separate actions, i.e., dividing Jesus' garments and casting lots for his seamless χιτῶν. In the OT passage the Psalm's parallelism is meant to be a double description of one action, whereas in the Fourth Gospel it is understood as being fulfilled in two separate actions. The parallelism of Ps 21:19 (LXX)--not seen in the Synoptics--permits the Evangelist to demonstrate the fulfilment of prophecy by incorporating the preservation of the tunic. The familiar ἵνα ἡ γραφή (13:18; 17:12; 19:36) confirms the fittingness of these events.

#### sect. 19:25-27

"So the soldiers did this." (v. 25) Here μὲν οὖν not only resumes the narrative but, coupled with *de*, serves to contrast the executioners with the faithful women (μὲν...δὲ, compare 20:31,32; 19:32,33).<sup>25</sup> The Evangelist places the women in the midst of the crucifixion scene, in contradistinction to the Synoptic gospels (cf. Mark 15:40; Matt 27:55-56; Luke 23:49),<sup>26</sup> where they stand at a distance. There are no Synoptic parallels to vv. 26-27. Schnackenburg and Bultmann attribute these verses to the Evangelist's own hand.<sup>27</sup> Dodd, however, posits that these verses do "not seem to be dictated by Johannine theology...[but]...may belong to a special form of the tradition."<sup>28</sup> The μὲν...δὲ therefore, is both resumptive and adversative. It serves a transitional

purpose by introducing this unique Johannine pericope.

The women who look on "from afar" (cf. Mark 15:40 and par.) are here depicted "standing near" the cross of Jesus "in a local and figurative sense."<sup>29</sup> These women are identified as "his mother,...his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." (v. 25) "Sentence structure favours four women, A+B, C+D."<sup>30</sup> Luke omits these names during the crucifixion (cf. Luke 23:49), but speaks of "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James...." (Luke 24:10) during the resurrection account. Mark 15:40b and Matthew 27:56 identify three women: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses/Joseph, and Salome/the mother of the sons of Zebedee. "All of this is an eloquent witness that John did not borrow from the Synoptic lists."<sup>31</sup>

Jesus' mother, Mary, is not mentioned in the Synoptic accounts of the crucifixion. All four gospels note the presence of Mary Magdalene.<sup>32</sup> The Synoptics commonly identify Mary the mother of James. It is not improbable "given the closeness of Mark and Matthew,"<sup>33</sup> that Salome is the mother of the sons of Zebedee (by which "Joanna" (Luke 24:10; 8:3) is excluded. Definitive identification of the women is impossible; probability is all that may be had. "The names of the women have frequently oscillated in the tradition, [and]...the Evangelist's [interest]...centres only on...the mother of Jesus."<sup>34</sup> Verses 26- 27 substantiate the importance of Mary.

The history of exegetical commentary upon vv. 25-27 is well beyond the scope of these brief remarks. However, it may be conveniently divided into three distinct categories of criticism: historical, typological and mariological.<sup>35</sup> Historical criticism focuses upon Jesus' concern for his mother, i.e., his filial duty to provide for her care. Typological interpretation envisions Mary and the Beloved Disciple as representative symbols within the Divine *economia*, e.g., the Church and the Believer. Finally, mariological criticism considers Jesus' mother's relevance to the personal salvation of believers.

The filial concern Jesus shows his mother from the cross is evident. However, the Evangelist does not hesitate to give a theological nuance to an historical event (11:38-44). Therefore, historical and typological considerations are not mutually exclusive *a priori*. Some commentators<sup>36</sup> explain the episode by identifying the Beloved Disciple as Jesus' first cousin, whose familial bond would require solicitude for Jesus' mother. But the identification of the disciple as Mary's nephew is problematic (see n. 39). Most commentators favour a typological or secondary meaning to vv. 26-27. Mary and the Beloved Disciple variously represent: Jewish and Gentile Christianity;<sup>37</sup> the Church and



Believer;<sup>38</sup> the Jewish Church and the perfect Christian believer;<sup>39</sup> the remnant Israel receptive to messianic salvation and the guarantor of Jesus' words;<sup>40</sup> the New Eve/Lady Zion and the Christian;<sup>41</sup> the mother of the Faithful and the ideal Christian convert;<sup>42</sup> and the "new eschatological family relationship to Jesus stemming from discipleship."<sup>43</sup>

The last secondary meaning of vv. 26-27 derives principally from the new relationship constituted between Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple, as well as the significant status of that disciple within the Johannine community. He is the model disciple of Jesus and the witness for the community. The identity of the Beloved Disciple demands a study well beyond the scope of these Notes. Briefly however, the identification of the disciple depends upon the present passage and consideration of 13:23-26, "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was lying close to the breast of Jesus; so Simon Peter beckoned to him...."; 20:2-10, "So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper...." and 21:24, "This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true."

John, the son of Zebedee, meets many of the criteria for the Beloved Disciple which these passages suggest: he was one of the twelve; one of the three select disciples accompanying Jesus, and a companion to Peter (mentioned frequently in the Synoptics and Acts (chs. 3-4)),<sup>44</sup> but he is never explicitly so identified. Furthermore, "the combination of external and internal evidence associating the Fourth Gospel with the Son of Zebedee, makes the strongest hypothesis, if one is prepared to give credence to the Gospel's claim of an eyewitness account."<sup>45</sup> Such a claim would strengthen the symbolic import of vv. 26-27 as the inception of the new eschatological family relationship to Jesus, which transpires at his command between Jesus' mother and τὸν μαθητὴν ... ὃν ἠγάπα.

Jesus addresses his mother as "Woman", a title reminiscent of Cana (2:4) and the time when Jesus' "hour" had not yet come. But on Golgotha, Jesus' "hour" has arrived. Amidst his exaltation, Jesus commends his mother to the Beloved Disciple, and gives him to her. Jesus

arranges that his filial duty should be done by this disciple. But this is only implied. What is actually said is that they would be in a new relationship. His mother loses her Son, but she gains a new son, one who most fully knows the mind of the Son whom she lost.<sup>46</sup>

And the Beloved Disciple ἔλαβεν ... αὐτὴν εἰς τὰ ἴδια (i.e.,

into his own home). (see Esth 5:10, LXX: "Nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and went εἰς τὰ ἴδια"). Once Jesus' mother and the Disciple were established in this eschatological familial bond, Jesus declared that all was now "finished". (v. 28) His work was complete. "In this climactic hour men and women [were] to be recreated as God's children when the Spirit is breathed forth. The sorrowful scene at the foot of the cross represents the birthpangs by which the Spirit of salvation is brought forth...and handed over (19:30)."<sup>47</sup>

### sect. 19:28-30

The Passion account reaches its climax in these verse, and illumines the preceding pericope. Jesus completes the Father's work; brings the scriptures to fruition; dies, and gives over τὸ πνεῦμα.

The Fourth Gospel accords with Mark 15:36 and Matt 27:48 in describing the offer of a wine-soaked sponge to Jesus prior to his death. (v. 29) It agrees with Luke 23:36 in reporting one such incident at the hands of the soldiers, and by not associating the incident with Elijah (cf. Mark 15:37; Matt 27:50). Peculiar to John is Jesus' cry of thirst; mention of a jar; use of hyssop; the note that Jesus drank, and the proleptic handing-over of the Spirit.<sup>48</sup>

The phrase "ἐτιδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς" echoes 13:1, the beginning of the Book of Glory. In 13:1 Jesus knew that his "hour" had arrived; on the cross, Jesus knows that his "hour" is complete. Μετὰ τοῦτο ("after this") serves a transitional purpose, yet links the previous episode (vv. 26-27) with Jesus' knowledge of completing the Father's work. There have been no intervening occurrences. "ἤδη πάντα ("already all") reaffirms the tasks accomplished (3:35; 13:3, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands...."; 15:15). The perfect passive participle of τελέω, τετέλεσται (vv. 28, 30) connotes completion; the finishing of an activity, or having brought a task to an end.<sup>49</sup> Here it refers to "the words and works of [Jesus'] ministry which have now come to their end."<sup>50</sup>

However, the Evangelist also employs τελειῶ in the aorist subjunctive passive form (τελειωθῇ) with reference to scripture. In non-biblical literature τελειῶ is "factive and means to make τελειος", a totality.<sup>51</sup> In v. 28 it connotes the fulfilment of an activity, bringing an act to a state of perfection; but a perfection which has "nothing to do with the end or cessation of activity."<sup>52</sup> The scriptures are not brought to an end, but to fruition.<sup>53</sup> Since Jesus has completed (τελέω) the work of his Father has



given him to do "the results of its consummation can begin...." (+(^A This is an illuminative distinction, especially since the Evangelist normally employs πληρώω with regard to scripture (12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24; 19:36). The use of τελειῶ indicates an important link between vv. 25-27 and vv. 28- 30 insofar as the fulfilment of the scriptures--amidst the completed (τελέω) work of Jesus--now awaits the bestowal of the Spirit at the moment of his death (v. 30). Ezekiel 11:19-20 ("And I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them...."); 36:26-28; and Joel 2:28-29 ("...I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.") prophecy this ongoing renewal. Zechariah 14:8 ("Out of Jerusalem shall flow living waters...") Jesus himself alludes to at the feast of Tabernacles--and John 7:38-39 makes explicit his intent: "Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The exalted Jesus is about to be glorified, and those who believe (Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple) stand near to his cross. The ongoing fulfilment (τελειῶ) is about to commence.

Unlike the Synoptic account, Jesus said, "I thirst" (v. 28) and was given on hyssop a sponge soaked in sour wine ("οἶνος or *poska*). Most commentators believe that the event recalls Ps 69:21 (68:22): "...for my thirst they gave me "οἶνος to drink"<sup>55</sup> because διψῶ and "οἶνος are paired. However, some scholars suggest the suitability of Ps 22:15, "...and my tongue cleaves to my jaws", since the afflicted man suffers thirst. The wine-soaked sponge was brought (προσηΑΥνεκῶν) to his mouth on hyssop,<sup>56</sup> and Jesus drank. Once again, the historical event bears a symbolic nuance: Jesus drinks the cup of the Father's will (18:11). Then "εἶπεν τετέλεσται, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα." (v. 30) This is the moment of Jesus glorification; the culmination of the Evangelist's soteriological understanding, and the inception of a pneumatological ecclesiology fashioned in vv. 25-27.

Jesus declares that his work is finished (τετέλεσται, v. 28) in contrast to the parallel Synoptic description (cf. Mark 15:37, "a loud cry"; Matt 27:50, "a loud voice"; Luke 23:46, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.") of the event (i.e., an earlier cry of abandonment (Mark 15:34, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"; Matt 27:46). Then Jesus, "bowing his head, gave over the Spirit." He retains the initiative and control demonstrated throughout the arrest, trial and crucifixion. Jesus' death is voluntary: "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; this charge I received from my Father." (10:18)

Further support for the voluntary character of Jesus' death derives from *παρέδωκεν* in contradistinction to *ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα* (Matt 27:50, or Mark 15:37, "ἐξήπνευσεν"). *Παραδίδωμι* is used as "handing over" (13:21) or a "willingness to die, self-sacrificial love."<sup>57</sup> Jesus both lays down his life and gives over the Spirit. (v. 30)

Commentators are divided as to the meaning of *τὸ πνεῦμα* in this context. Some strictly identify the phrase with Jesus' human spirit;<sup>58</sup> others understand the *πνεῦμα* to denote the Spirit<sup>59</sup> promised by Jesus. A third group acknowledges the "implied possibility"<sup>60</sup> of the Spirit, but feel evidence to be lacking. The varied interpretations arise from the different uses which the Evangelist makes of *τὸ πνεῦμα* in the Gospel. The term connotes: wind (3:8); emotion (11:33; 13:21); Spirit (7:38); the "world of ultimate reality" when conjoined with *ἀληθεία* (16:13), and the medium of rebirth (3:5) with reference to the Hebraic antithesis of flesh-spirit.<sup>61</sup> *Παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα* bears a twofold connotation (and illustrates Johannine *double entendre*): through Jesus' death comes the gift of the Spirit.<sup>62</sup> Jesus' glorification, his death, is the prerequisite for the coming of the Spirit (7:39). Admittedly in 19:30, Jesus gives the Spirit in a proleptic manner<sup>63</sup> which necessitates fuller explication in 20:22, "λάβετε πνεῦμα ἁγίον". However, the tandem relationship of Jesus-Spirit issues from the cross.<sup>64</sup> Indeed

the λόγος, being θεοῦ has the nature of πνεῦμα and ... is said to be ἁληθής and ζῶν. Being πνεῦμα He became σὰρξ, partook fully in the experience of the lower world, and gave himself to death...in love for mankind. It is this which makes possible...the ἀνάβασις which is also rebirth ἐκ πνεύματος. Until Jesus was thus 'glorified', οὐπω ἦν πνεῦμα....<sup>65</sup>

The end of the Father's work ("τετέλεσται!") elicits the ongoing fruition of the Scriptures (τελλεῖσθαι) through the proleptic bestowal of the Spirit (Παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα) upon the newly established community ("γύναι ... ἴδε!") standing near the cross.

#### sect. 19:31-37

The Fourth Gospel does not permit the import of Jesus' death to remain tinged with doubt. The Evangelist provides this pericope (the piercing of Jesus' side) to eradicate any vestige of uncertainty. The basic story integral to the two *testimonia* probably derives from his source (v. 34b "and water"; v. 35 are



attributed to the redactor).<sup>66</sup>

"Since it was the Day of Preparation" (i.e., Friday before the sabbath) the Jews asked Pilate that the bodies of the crucified be removed, honouring Deut 21:22-23. The sabbath was a "Great Day" because it coincided with the first festival day of Passover (Nisan 15), according to Johannine chronology. If, however, "it fell on Nisan 16 as the Synoptics suppose, the title 'great' is still suitable, since on it according to Pharisaic tradition, the Omer sheaf was presented (Lev. 23:11)."<sup>67</sup>

They asked that the legs be broken--the *crurifragium*--in order to hasten death. The soldiers came, broke the legs of one, then of the other; but Jesus they found already dead. "They did not break his legs." (v. 33) The literary progression and Jesus' location between the "αλλους δυο (19:18) focuses attention upon him. A soldier pierced Jesus' side with his spear (λδγξη, not 'υσσφ) "and immediately there came out blood and water." (v. 34)

This verse has prompted wideranging speculation. Did the author intend to confirm Jesus death<sup>68</sup> or to evoke a symbolic meaning?<sup>69</sup> The testimonium (v. 36) explains Jesus' deliverance from the *crurifragium* (see Exod 12:46; Num 9:12, "They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it...") and v. 37 indicates the significance of the lance thrust: "They shall look on him whom they have pierced" (see Zech 12:10). The Spirit which Jesus has given over at his death is symbolically confirmed by the flow of water from Christ's pierced body. "From the crucified body of Christ flows the life-giving stream: the water which is the Spirit given to believers in him (7:38-39); the water which if a man drink he will never thirst again (4:14) and the blood which is 'αληθης πδσις (6:55)."<sup>70</sup>

This, the writer say, is eyewitness testimony: "'ο 'εθρακως μεμαρτρηκεν". He who has seen is the Beloved Disciple<sup>71</sup> as 19:25 and 21:24 would indicate. His testimony is true: "That one (ekeinos) knows that he tells the truth." 'εκελκος has been variously interpreted to mean: Jesus (3:28,30; 7:11; 9:28);<sup>72</sup> God (5:19; 6:29; 8:42); the Johannine writer,<sup>73</sup> or the eyewitness.<sup>74</sup> The last opinion is best. It permits identification of 'εκελκος with the eyewitness (Beloved Disciple) which underscores the value of his testimony, i.e., as he who stands near the cross. Moreover, his testimony concerning the Christ-event is ordered to faith (πιστευ[σ]ητε!).

sect. 19:38-42

The burial of Jesus is less problematic. The Johannine account is similar to the Synoptic report. Common to all four gospels is the detail that Joseph of Arimathea asked for Jesus' body (Mark 15:42 and par.). In Mark and Luke, Joseph is described as βουλευτής. Peculiar Johannine details are: ὧν... Ἰουδαίων; the stress upon μαθητής (6:60,66; 7:3); use of κεκρυμμένος (κρύφω (8:59; 12:36), κρύπτω (7:4,10)) and διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων (7:13; 20:19; (9:22)). Also, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, which provides the transition may be a Johannine mark.<sup>75</sup> Finally, only the Fourth Gospel notes the aid of Nicodemus (3:1-14) in the process of Jesus' burial.

Nicodemus carries an extravagant amount of mixed spice sufficient for the burial of a king (see 2 Chron 16:14). Jesus' body was bound in linen cloths strewn with spices (v. 40) which, the Evangelist interpolates, was the Jewish custom for burial. His σῶμα (body) was placed in a new tomb (Matt 27:60), in which no one had ever been laid (οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς). The proximity and newness of the tomb indicate that "a divine ordering of events" continues even amidst death.<sup>76</sup> The entombment is not provisional. No mention is made of the stone sealing Jesus' grave, or of the Galilean women at the site (cf. Mark 15:46-16:1; Matt 27:60-61; Luke 23:55-56). Nevertheless, the burial preparation and tomb are fitting for the Crucified King.

### Conclusion:

The Johannine Passion narrative portrays Jesus as King and the fulfiller of the Father's work. The subsection, vv. 19:16b-42, illustrates these christological and soteriological themes; which gives provenance to authentic pneumatology and Mariology. The Evangelist does not hesitate to give an historical event a theological nuance ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε.

The Fourth Gospel declares that Jesus is King (vv. 16b-22); the one who brings prophecy to fulfillment (vv. 23-24); the one who establishes a new eschatological familial bond (vv. 25-27) between his mother and the beloved disciple; the faithful Son who completes the Father's work and bestows the Spirit on his fledgling community (vv 28-30), and the one whose glorification effects the ongoing fruition of the scriptures.

Verses 19:25-27 are preparatory for the moment of glorification. Their unique character and proximity to the climactic Passion event, indicate a derivative significance subordinate to vv.28-30. The new eschatological family (i.e., the ἐκκλησία), established in Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple,



is confirmed by the bestowal of the Spirit. The "γυνή" receives the "μαθητής 'αγαπητός"; the New Eve is given to her "son", and each acquires the Guarantor of the bond. Pneumatological and mariological criticism are apt for the historical event and the gospel form which communicates it--indeed, they are necessary. The relevance of Mary to the personal salvation of believers authentically issues from her role as the "γυνή", addressed in Jesus' command and empowered by the Spirit at the inception of the bond. Vv. 19:16b-42 provide for, and authenticate a locus of mariological exegesis: vv. 16b-22 portray the control and initiative of the King, which suffuses the entirety of the Passion narrative, later evident in his filial concern for his mother; vv. 23-24 designate Jesus as fulfiller of prophecy and serve as the point of contrast with the faithful women; vv. 25-27 delineate the foundation of the new familial bond by Jesus' word of command; vv. 28-30 reveal the completion of the Father's work; the ongoing fruition of the scriptures, and the gift of the Spirit to the "'εκκλησία" newly founded; vv. 31-37 confirm the death of the Crucified King and suggest, not only the "life-giving water" which is the Spirit given over, but a quasi-"sacramental" symbolic affinity with Baptism and the Eucharist, while vv. 38-42 reassert Jesus' kingship and the divine ordering of events, while awaiting the definitive confirmation -- the resurrection.

Although vv. 25-27 are not the core of a chiasmic structuring of 19:16b-42, nevertheless mariological claims may be confidently asserted because of the transposition of the subsection's events in light of the glorification of Jesus and bestowal of the Spirit at the moment of his death. It is not the sole scriptural locus of legitimate mariology; and indeed, too much ought not to be asserted on its weight alone. However, Mary as Mother of Disciples (then and now) or as Mother of the Church (which is nothing other than the "new eschatological community") is neither an attenuated nor an excessive mariological claim.

Indeed,

The word of Scripture has a theandric, divinely human quality. ...This human word contains a 'plus', something extra, an objective dynamism whose meaning comes to be recognized in the Church only by a laborious process. ...[We] must make vital contact with the reality of faith itself and not merely with the biblical doctrine about this reality if, as we read, we are to derive a deeper meaning from the presence of Mary under the cross....<sup>"77</sup>

## Notes

- 1 R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 913.
- 2 a) Brown, 897-966  
 b) J. H. Bernard, *St. John*, Vol. II, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1949 3rd ed.) 625-652.  
 c) R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. III, (New York: Crossroads, trans., 1982), 268-299.  
 d) B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, (Great Britain: Oliphants, 1972), 573-594.  
 e) R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972 trans.), xii.  
 f) L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1971), 69.  
 g) J. McPolin, *John*, (NT 6; Wilmington: Michael Glazier Publishers, 1971), 243-251.
- 3 McPolin proposes that vv. 19-37 comprise five "still snapshots" of Calvary, 244.
- 4 Most commentators disagree as to the import of the exchange among Jesus, his mother, and the Beloved Disciple. See "Christ's Last Will and Testament in the Interpretation of the Fathers of the Church and the Scholastics", H. Langkammer, OFM, in *Anton* 43 (1968), 99-109 for an historical perspective.
- 5 Following Bultmann and Schnackenburg.
- 6 Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, (New York: UBS, 1971), 253-254.
- 7 Bultmann, 667.
- 8 Bultmann, 667; Brown, 915. Taylor (*Mark*, 658) has attempted to isolate pre-Markan elements which constitute a substrata which John may share or expand.
- 9 C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John*, (London: S. P. C. K. 1967), 455.
- 10 Brown, 916.
- 11 Brown, 791.
- 12 R. T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), 133-134. He attempts to isolate the source material from Johannine additions.
- 13 Brown, 884.
- 14 J. A. Fitzmyer, S. J., *A Christological Catechism*, (New York: Paulist,



1982), 59-60.

15 BDF 1882 (cf. D. Tabachovitz, *Eranos* 44 (1946), 301-305.

16 Bultmann, *ad loc.*

17 It has been suggested that the author was countering a Docetic heresy which claimed that Simon was crucified in lieu of Jesus (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, 1.24:4; *PG* 7:677); see Bultmann, 688. The introduction of Isaac-Christ typology has also been posited (John Chrysostom, *Jo. Hom.* LXXXV I; *PG* 59; 459). Such typology relates Gen 22:6 and Isa 53 to the Christ, and by extension, to Jesus' death. J. E. Woods ("Isaac Typology in the New Testament", *NTS* 14 (1968), 587.) believes that "...in the Isaac typology [there is] a connexion between the title 'Lamb of God' (1:29) given to Jesus...and the killing of Jesus...when the Passover lambs were being slain in Jerusalem."

18 Josephus provides adequate proof of execution by crucifixion: *Ant.* 13.14, 2 380-381; mass crucifixions under Alexander Jannaeus: *JW* 1.4.6 97; Life 75 420; *JW* 2.14.9 306-308; 3.7.33 321; 5.6.5. 589; 5.11.1 449-451. By Roman governors, prefects or procurators, see *JW* 2.5.2. 129. By Antiochus Epiphanes, *Ant.* 12.5.4. 256.

Also, recent discovery of ossuary remains at Giv'at ha-Mivtar advance extra-biblical, non-literary confirmation of the practice. Analysis of skeletal remains gives archaeological evidence of execution by crucifixion, as well as the crurifragium procedure described in John 19:32. See V. Tzaferis, "Jewish Tombs at and near Giv'at Ha-Mivtar, Jerusalem", *IEJ* 20 (1970), 18-32.

Aside from the above extra-biblical proof, two Qumran texts shed light upon the practice of crucifixion in Palestine: the peshar on Nahum (4Qp Nah), frgs 3-4, col.1, especially lines 7-8, and 11 Q Temple 64:6-13. The last named Qumran material prescribes that certain crimes--treason and evasion of due process--were to be punished by crucifixion. See J. A. Fitzmyer, S. J., "Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature and the New Testament", *CBQ* 40 (1978), 493-513. cf., J. Baumgarten, *H. M. Orlinsky Volume* (Eretz-Israel 16; Jerusalem, 1983).

Finally, the New Testament provides several references to the death of Jesus as a "hanging on a tree": Acts 10:39; I Pet 2:24 and most importantly, Gal 3:13.

19 Bultmann, 666; Schnackenburg, 272.

20 Brown, 919.

21 Bultmann, 666.

22 See A. Eidersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, (New

- York: Longmans, 1897) I, 625; also A. Kennedy, *ET* 24 (1912- 13), 90-91.
- 23 Bultmann, 671; Bernard, 630; Schnackenburg, 273-274. (cf. Col. Repond, "Le Costume du Christ", *Bib* 3 (1922), 3-14.)  
The  $\chi\tau\omega\acute{\nu}$  suggested to "Origen the wholeness of Christ's teaching; to Cyprian the unity of the Church,...to Cyril the Virgin Birth," (M. F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), 25.) to Philo (*Fug.*, 110-112) "a symbol of the Word" and perhaps to the Johannine writer the high priestly robe (Exod 28:4; Lev 16:4). Brown, 920-921. The tunic is seamless (see Josephus, *Ant* III; 7, 4; #161) which may avert to Aaron's garb (Exod 39:27, (LXX) 36:34).
- 24 The Gospel of Peter 12: "And they laid down his garments before him and divided them among themselves and cast the lot upon them", employs  $\beta\acute{\omicron}\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu\ \lambda\alpha\chi\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ , which reflects the hybridization between John and the Synoptics. (Mark 15:24; Matt 27:35; and Luke 23:34) *N. T. Apocrypha*, Vol. I (Great Britain: Westminster, 1963), 184.
- 25 Schnackenburg, 273, 276.
- 26 Brown, 904; Bultmann, 671.
- 27 Schnackenburg, 278; Bultmann, 666.
- 28 Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 428. Earlier in Tradition he posited that these vv. "did not form part of the Passion narrative which reached our Evangelist through oral tradition", 128. Furthermore, efforts to give it a symbolic meaning were "unconvincing", 128.
- 29 Schnackenburg, 275. Barrett doubts the proximity of the group to Jesus would have been permitted. Barrett, 458. However, E. Stauffer in *Jesus and His Story*, (London: S. C. M., 1960) maintains that the crucified were surrounded by family and friends throughout the ordeal. Stauffer, 111, 1791.
- 30 Brown, 904.
- 31 Brown, 906.
- 32 Abstracting from the appropriateness of using resurrection accounts for the purpose of identifying the women in the Passion narrative.
- 33 Brown, 906.
- 34 Bultmann, 672.
- 35 Schnackenburg, 281.
- 36 Bernard, 633.
- 37 Bultmann, 673.
- 38 J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel According to John*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 196.



- 39 G. H. C. Macgregor, *The Gospel of John*, (New York: Harper and  
Bros., 1928), 348.
- 40 Schnackenburg, 279.
- 41 Brown, 926.
- 42 E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1960),  
530.
- 43 R. Brown, et. al., *Mary in the New Testament*, (Philadelphia: Fortress  
Press, 1978), 218.
- 44 Brown, xcvi. See xcii-xcvi for further information.
- 45 Brown, xcvi. The reversal of this position in *The Community of the  
Beloved Disciple*, 31-34 does not adequately address internal/external  
evidence; neither does the criticism sufficiently counter second century  
traditional ascriptions of authorship.
- 46 Lindars, 579. See Joseph A. Grassi, "The Role of Jesus' Mother in  
John's Gospel: A Reappraisal," *CBQ* 48 (1986) 67-80.
- 47 Brown, 926.
- 48 Brown, 928, 930.
- 49 *TDNT*, Vol. 8, 56.
- 50 G. Bampfylde, "John 19:30: A Case for a Different Translation", *NT*  
11 (1969), 250.
- 51 *TDNT*, Vol 8, 79.
- 52 Bampfylde, 250.
- 53 "'ἡ γράφη' could mean the whole of scripture...(2:22(?); 10:35;  
20:9) in John.... There is no other instance of New Testament evidence  
for use of this word (τελείω) in connection with scriptural proof."  
Schnackenburg, 460.
- 54 Bampfylde rejects that the fulfilment of scripture rests with Jesus  
saying "I thirst". Bampfylde, 251. Brown suggests that it may relate  
to Jesus giving over his mother to the Beloved Disciple. Brown, 908.
- 55 *Poska* is a "diluted vinegary wine drunk by soldiers and labourers".  
Brown, 909. Schnackenburg, 640.  
Psalm 69: Schnackenburg, 283; Fortna, 130; Bultmann, 674; Barrett,  
459; Lindars, 580 and Bernard, 640.
- 56 Hyssop is well attested textually, but many commentators (e.g.,  
Bultmann, 674; Bernard, 640; and less decidedly, Schnackenburg,  
459) prefer 'υσσφ (javelin) based on minuscule 476. The Passover  
imagery (e.g., Exod 12:22) by which the Evangelist relates Jesus to the  
Paschal lamb is simultaneously discounted by 'υσσφ. However,  
Jesus dies during the slaughter of the Passover lambs in the Temple  
and v. 36 evokes additional Paschal lamb symbolism: "...you shall not  
break a bone of it." (Exod 12:46) Therefore, weak textual evidence

and contrary internal evidence makes hyssop the preferred reading.

- 57 *TDNT*, Vol 2, 169, sect. 1 (see Mark 14:10; 15:1; Luke 23:25) also 170, sect. 4. (see Acts 25:25; I Cor 13:3)
- 58 Bultmann, 675; Schnackenburg, 816; Bernard, 636; J. N. Sanders, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 410; Morris, 816.
- 59 Hoskyns, 532; Brown, 931, "proleptic", 970; Bampfylde, 255- 257; Macgregor, 349; McPolin, 249; caution is needed, there is no full Trinitarian doctrine present here!
- 60 Lindars, 583; Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 428; Barrett, 460.
- 61 See R. Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel", *NTS* 13 (1967), 113-132. Dodd, 226.
- 62 McPolin, 249.
- 63 Brown, 931.
- 64 S. H. Hooke, "The Spirit Was Not Yet", *NTS* 9 (1962), 379: cites the double portion of Elijah's spirit which Elisha receives upon his master's departure. This analogy is helpful here. Also, see Brown, "Paraclete", 120, 123-124. Brown notes that "we find" in late Jewish thought the basic elements that appear in the Johannine picture of the Paraclete: "the tandem relationship of two salvific figures...; the passing on of his spirit by the main salvific figure; God's granting a spirit which would enable the recipient to understand and interpret divine deed and word authoritatively; a personal (angelic) spirit who would lead the chosen ones against the forces of evil...(and) would teach and guide them to truth." Brown, 123. Therefore, "when John 14:6 identifies the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit, this is not an artificial editorial joining of two distinct concepts...." Brown, 125.
- 65 Dodd, *Interpretation*, 226.
- 66 Excluding vv. 34b, 35: Fortna, 131 and Bultmann, 677. Excluding v. 35, Dodd, *Interpretation*, 429.
- 67 Barrett, 460; Bultmann, 676. See H. L. Strach and Billerbeck, 1922-1928, *Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Vol. II, 581f. Nisan 14: Preparation Day for the Passover--lambs killed during the afternoon; Nisan 15: Passover--Passover lambs eaten after sundown.
- 68 Barrett, 463; Bernard, 646.
- 69 Bultmann, 677, "a miracle"; McPolin, 249, "Jesus' death (blood) is life (water) for the believer"; Sanders, 412, the sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism; Macgregor, 463, Jesus' presence in both the sacraments and



the Spirit; Schnackenburg, 294, Spirit, although sacramental allusion is not immediate.

- 70 Dodd, Interpretation, 428; see Schnackenburg, 294.  
 71 So Sanders, 412 (see 19:25; 21:24); Macgregor, 352; Schnackenburg, 290 (see I John 1:2); Bultmann, 679  
 72 Hoskyns, 535.  
 73 Sanders, 412.  
 74 Bultmann adapts the sentence: "We know him ('εκεῖνον), that he tells the truth." Bultmann, 526; Barrett, 463; Brown, 937.  
 75 Schnackenburg, 296.  
 76 Bultmann, 680.  
 77 Eduard Schillebeeckx, O.P., "Exegesis, Dogmatics and the Development of Dogma" *Dogmatic vs Biblical Theology*, (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964) 135-136.

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## On the Role of Conscience in Christian Ethics

R.Alan Russell

Recent debates within the Church, together with their associated developments, have once again raised the issue of conscience as a topic for discussion. Perhaps most publicity has been focused on disagreement over the ordination of women. Thus one group would claim the right to withdraw from any church activities in which women were exercising a function as ordained ministers even when the denomination to which they belong had made the corporate decision to admit women to such a role. Correspondingly, the other group would consider it a moral obligation to campaign against and even defy the legislation of a denomination which denied that women could properly be given the same ecclesiastical status as men. Both parties would equally claim to acting out of 'conscience', often as if the invocation of the term were sufficient to rule out any further debate.

It would seem, therefore, that the time is right for an investigation of the role that conscience has come to play in Christian moral thinking. Indeed, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has asked its Doctrine Committee to report on the church's understanding of conscience and the mode of its development and operation. I write as a member of that church, and this rather preliminary study is offered as very much a Presbyterian view, with the hope that it might contribute to a more general discussion.

It would seem that there are two main uses of 'conscience'. The first, and perhaps the most common, understanding is in terms of feeling, especially feelings of guilt. Thus we speak of 'pangs of conscience' and of 'a guilty conscience' and of a 'clear' or a 'good' conscience. This experience of moral pain or discomfort seems to point to something which although within us is not altogether part of us as it provides a kind of running commentary on our past behaviour, our present pattern of life or our contemplation of future action. The role of Jiminy Cricket in Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* probably sums up the essentials of what many people consider their consciences to be.

The second use of conscience has to do with reason rather than feeling. Here we are speaking of the process by which a person makes mature judgements of good and bad, right and wrong and of his responsibility to stick to those judgements even in the face of majority opinion or prudential disadvantage. It is within this context that someone is compelled to say: "Here

I stand, I can do no other..", for he can reject the judgement he has made only at the cost of rejecting himself as a rational person.

Clearly these two uses of 'conscience' need to be distinguished, although there are obvious connections between them. For example, if a person publicly repudiated deeply held religious or political convictions simply because of a fear of imprisonment by hostile authorities we would expect her to feel inner moral condemnation. But conscience as feeling has no necessary connection with rational convictions. Take the case where someone has been brought up to believe that sexual gratification is intrinsically evil. That person might discover overwhelming arguments which rightly lead him to change his mind, but nevertheless he might have profound difficulties in marriage because of persistent pangs of guilt. It is notable that this experience of conscience found its place in the psycho-analytic theories of Sigmund Freud and his successors. Whatever we might think of such theories as a whole, they have been helpful in drawing attention to the pathological side of guilt feelings.

Thus, on their own, feelings of conscience are an uncertain guide for morality. They are tied to upbringing, culture and varieties of underlying moral beliefs so that a Buddhist might have a bad conscience about placing slug pellets in his garden while a Christian might feel no moral discomfort about such an action. The possibility of a Nazi conscience, troubled about an act of weakness in allowing an appealing Jewish child to escape capture would seem to be as feasible as a Christian conscience, troubled that no action was taken to help those who died.

In the New Testament conscience is frequently considered in terms of feeling and some scholars would argue that this is the primary use of the expression<sup>1</sup>. Thus the phenomenon of an accusing, even a defending conscience is evidence for the moral responsibility of the Gentiles before God (Romans 2:15) but a clear conscience is not in itself sufficient for moral complacency (1 Corinthians 4:4). Indeed, a conscience can be seared or corrupted (I Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:15) or misleading because it is imperfectly educated (1 Corinthians 8:4-8). When, through Christ, we draw near to God in faith we are delivered from a guilty conscience by the assurance that our sins have been forgiven (Hebrews 10:22).

The following moral consequences appear to follow from this. The first is the obligation to live a consistent Christian life which leaves the conscience clear. In Acts 24:16 Paul declares: "...I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man", and references a 'good' or a 'clear' conscience in

Romans 9:1, 2 Corinthians 1:12, 1 Timothy 1:19, etc., relate to the peace of mind which matches life with faith. Such consistency should also be detected by the consciences of others (2 Corinthians 4:2, 5:11).

Other obligations relate to the fact that the consciences of different people can prompt them to incompatible behaviour. This is illustrated by the passages in 1 Corinthians and Romans where Paul discusses whether it is right for a Christian to eat meat which has been offered to idols. Paul identifies two groups. The first is composed of those who have reached clear opinions - who "know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but on", that "...food does not bring us to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do" (1 Cor. 8:4,8). But there are others who are not so sure, who think of "such food .. as having been sacrificed to an idol" (1 Cor. 8:7), who consider "one day more sacred than another" (Rom. 14:5). Paul does not hide his own opinion on these matters. The first group, 'the strong' have reached the right conclusions. But being right is of less importance than the obligation both to obey the prompting of one's own conscience and to preserve the integrity of the consciences of others, even when they are 'weak' (1 Cor. 8:10).

Thus Paul gives the prompting of conscience a paramount moral importance. The 'weak' brother who because of the example of the 'strong' is "emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols" is 'destroyed' (1 Cor. 8:10-11), because "the man who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). In other words, if we are morally uncertain about a situation, we should withdraw from it.

Similarly, the 'strong' brother is under obligation to forgo his rights and sacrifice his freedom, even if this means abstaining from meat and wine. Indeed Paul goes so far as to say: "...whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God". Thus we are to avoid anything which might cause the conscience of another person to give him pain.

However, if the prompting of conscience is paramount in every situation this would mean that the entire range of our behaviour ought to be ruled by the conscientious scruples of others. But Paul imposes strict limitations on the extent to which conscience should have such a role. Obviously there were Jewish believers who experienced various degrees of doubt as to whether Gentiles could become Christians without also adopting at least some aspects of Judaism. The letter to the Galatians is a sustained rejection of their right to conscientious scruples on these matters. For Paul, the central themes of the



conscientious scruples on these matters. For Paul, the central themes of the gospel are at stake and, consequently, contrary views and even uncertainty are not to be tolerated. Even in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 the markers are already set out by comments such as "the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking.." (Rom. 14:17) and "..food does not bring us near to God" (1 Cor. 8:8). Thus, after all, the operation of conscience must be subservient to convictions about truth, and its authority is limited to areas which have little importance compared with the vital matters of the faith.

It is hardly surprising that Paul should come to such a conclusion, for unless conscience is held to be an infallible and universal moral alarm signal the final standards of morality have to be found elsewhere. Indeed, any system of morals must imply circumstances when the guilt feelings of others are either ignored or treated as signs of grave moral aberration. For example, the trial of Adolph Eichmann revealed that his mass murder of Jews was in line with a scrupulous conscience. Indeed, on one occasion he felt so guilty about having helped a half-Jewish couple that he even "confessed his sins" as he put it, to his superiors<sup>2</sup>.

This leads us to the question of how we distinguish between essential truths of faith and morality and the lesser matters where the scruples of others can be given priority. And this introduces the second idea of conscience in terms of rational reflection and judgement concerning good and bad, right and wrong. Historically it is this role of conscience which has been mostly taken for granted in theological and philosophical thinking. For Aquinas, *synderesis* is the capacity to attain some knowledge of natural moral law by rational reflection, while *conscientia* is the application of the principles so perceived to particular situations. Calvin defines conscience as the augmentation of our knowledge by a sense of the divine judgement so that it emerges as a forum for judging our inner as well as our outer lives. Thus, ".. a good conscience is nothing but inward integrity of heart" (Institutes IV.X.4).

Puritans like William Perkins viewed the operation of conscience as a 'practical syllogism' enabling the application of universal principles of conduct to particular situations. Richard Baxter rejects the idea of conscience as an autonomous moral authority. It is authorised only ".. to discern the law of God and call upon us to observe it.." (Christian Directory). It is true that the Puritans were aware of an accusing conscience as "a hell worm which shooteth like a stitch in a man's side", but the primary of role of conscience is as a faculty for applying revelation to life.

Westminster Confession of Faith falls into this tradition. Thus the Confession considers conscience as an activity of reason in discerning moral values and principles from the Word of God, and applying them to our lives.

This would seem to be the view of conscience required by Romans 13:5 where Christians are told to submit to the authorities 'not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience'. In other words, the obligation to submit to the government is a moral one, derived from the convictions of the gospel rationally applied to the situation. Similarly, the stand Paul takes against Judaizing influences in the Galatian Church is based on an argument that such tendencies pervert the gospel of Christ.

The *sola scriptura* strand of Reformation thought has included the conviction that the conclusions of conscience, based on scripture, are a personal matter before God. The Code states: "It is the privilege, right and duty of every man to examine the Scriptures for himself .. Having formed a definite conviction as to what the will of God is upon any subject, it is his duty to accept and obey it" (Par. 11). This idea is firmly stated by the Confession: "God alone is Lord of the conscience..", "...the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also"(XX. ii). Hence the person who approaches Scripture with a mind which is open to the leading of the Holy Spirit is committed to the ultimate authority of his own conclusions on doctrine and morality. It may be true that Scripture is acknowledged as "the only infallible rule of faith and practice" but interpretation and application have their final authority for each person only on the basis of individual reason and insight.

Notoriously, Christians who acknowledge the authority of Scripture and who claim the guidance of the same Holy Spirit have often differed profoundly on certain issues of doctrine and morality. The Confession approaches this problem by asserting that God has left the conscience "free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in any thing, contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship". But an important problem with conscience is a need for criteria which would enable us to distinguish precisely what is 'contrary' to the central issues of the faith, or those matters which are less important options where disagreement can be tolerated and respect for scruples comes into play.

There are, of course, preliminary conditions for being sure of our own conclusions or identifying those convictions of others which genuinely challenge the integrity of our own beliefs. Each person must be persuaded that she has honestly and prayerfully considered all the information which is relevant. We

honestly and prayerfully considered all the information which is relevant. We can only take seriously the claims of another when we are sure that he really understands the issues involved and has adequately researched them. Also, among those who agree on the authority of Scripture there are bound to be matters upon which it would be difficult, rationally, to disagree. Indeed the Christian would have a duty to make his own convictions subject to Scripture and to repudiate or modify them when he saw there was a conflict. Thus, the Confession emphasises that to "believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands [which are contrary to or beside God's Word] out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience". However, this still leaves wide scope for variety of interpretation where it would be sheer arrogance for sinful and fallible human beings to decide that the mere conflict of another's convictions with their own was, in itself, evidence of sin, ignorance or stupidity.

The Confession is helpful, therefore, in drawing attention to the personal nature of conscience, the prior authority of the Word of God for conscientious decisions and the obligation not to have convictions of conscience which either conflict with Scripture or concern matters on which Scripture is either silent or gives no clear ruling. On the other hand it is happy to forbid as 'pretence of Christian liberty' the opposition of 'any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it' as resisting 'the ordinance of God'. The censures of the Church and power of the civil magistrate are to be used against those who publish opinions or maintain lifestyles which are 'contrary to the light of nature', to 'the known principles of Christianity', or are 'destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church' (XX. iv). Thus the Confession chooses the option of imposing conformity. The pacifist who opposes what he otherwise considers to be 'lawful authority', the birth control pioneer who challenged the accepted view that contraception is unnatural, eighteenth century campaigners against slavery, theologians who questioned the adequacy of established confession and creeds, members of Christian pressure groups - all could be stung by the stance of this particular paragraph. We can be grateful for the assertion of the *Code, The book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, that "...civil rulers .. ought not to attempt in any way to constrain men's religious beliefs or invade the rights of conscience" (par. 14).

At least part of the reason for repudiating this strand of the Confession arises because there are genuine differences over what is or is not taught by 'the light of nature', what the 'known' principles of Christianity are, or what is really destructive to the peace and order of the church. (Another reason is a commitment to tolerance and pluralism in society). Imposing conformity only



reasonable consideration and also harmful. We have come to expect society not to tolerate propaganda advocating racism or sex with children. But a general imposition of conformity assumes that we have achieved the enviable position where our doctrinal and moral thinking is beyond substantial improvement and such an assumption would seem to be implied by what the confession has to say.

There are two reasons which might account for the certainty implied by the Confession. The first is the possibility of a special Divine revelation. We can immediately dismiss this since, for the authors, "The whole counsel of God .. is either set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men" (I.vi). The second reason might be the awareness of being part of a consensus of belief. Such a consensus is, of course, a vital part of church life. Christian faith is learned, articulated and developed within the community of the church. Indeed, how we read Scripture and develop a Christian conscience is developed in interaction with others so that "...no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation"(2 Pet. 1:20). The 'privilege, right and duty' to examine the Scriptures for ourselves takes place amidst discussion and sharing in a community which is bound together in love. But, while general agreement is important, there is always the possibility that the consensus may be challenged by the fresh insight of an active conscience. If this possibility is excluded, the Christian consensus can become a tyranny of the majority enforcing a conformity which excludes diversity, resists change and is therefore closed to fresh understandings and challenges from Scripture. Thus there is a very real danger of quenching the work of the Spirit in developing the life of the Church.

This means that we are still left with an irreducible personal component in the exercise of conscience. There is nothing more to work on than a personal satisfaction with the integrity of our own reason and investigation and our assessment of the claims of others that they have reached their convictions with the same integrity. How we judge such matters cannot, therefore, be presented in terms of clearly defined criteria.

At this stage it would be useful to see how this problem is approached by other thinkers. The best known discussion of conscience occurs in the sermons of Bishop Joseph Butler. Here the idea of conscience develops as a capacity to arbitrate on those occasions when human inclinations, even when ordered according to rational principles, conflict. "...whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or Divine reason .. as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart.<sup>3</sup> the operation of conscience is a

understanding, or as a perception of the heart.<sup>3</sup> the operation of conscience is a rational activity which is part of our human make-up rather than with an existence and identity of its own. For Butler, the decisions of conscience are ultimate, and since there is no judge outside of conscience itself it would seem that its judgement can only be intuitive.

Initially, the role of intuition appears to leave us with the same problems as those which are generated by the role of conscience as feeling. Intuition can differ from person to person so that, in itself, it is a shaky foundation for moral authority. However, intuitive decisions are not arbitrary. Consider, for example, how an expert musician judges the worth of a new composition, or perhaps a recent hymn tune. Certainly she will approach her assessment from a sound grasp of musical theory and an appreciation of a wide range of music. But more often than not the simple hearing of the hymn tune will be enough to establish its worth. No doubt, on reflection, she could give technical reasons for her judgement. But the initial reaction was the intuitive response of a trained mind.

Similarly the operation of conscience depends on a background of understanding and convictions about the proper order of human nature and, most importantly for the Christian, our knowledge of the Word of God. Otherwise, our moral intuitions degenerate into random responses. In global terms, this implies that, to some degree, the judgement of a person's conscience is relative to the beliefs and understanding of the community to which he belongs. The background of information and training will determine the convictions we hold.

## SOME CONCLUSIONS

We introduced conscience as a rational feature of our morality in the context of fundamental judgements which are bound up with our integrity as persons. We have also seen that there is no simple means of marking off those issues which ought to be matters of conscience from others which are either matters of opinion or of peripheral importance to our lives. However, the intuitive element of conscience does not reduce to random impulses, but is an important consequence of living an informed Christian life.

We also investigated the role of conscience as a felt response to our moral situation. The New Testament discussion raised the obligation to live the kind of consistent Christian lives which would keep our consciences clear and quiet. Also, we were left with the obligation to give a higher priority to the

certain matters which are of central importance where truth has to come before scruples.

In practice, when someone claims to have problems with conscience in a certain situation, we need to establish: (a) the extent to which the main difficulty is the experience of moral discomfort, or (b) how far dissent arises from the awareness of deeply held convictions essential to her moral integrity.

In case (a) there is an initial obligation for the person with the uneasy conscience to examine its source. Feelings of moral unease or guilt may well be relics from a way of life he has utterly rejected, or the holding of beliefs he now knows to be false. For example, given the events of Acts 10, it was inappropriate for Peter to feel moral unease about eating with Gentiles and he had an obligation to deal with his feelings. On the other hand it is necessary for those confronted by the negative moral feelings of another to decide on the importance of their own wishes and convictions. They must establish whether or not their own agenda is essential for Christian moral standards and the witness of the Church. If the matters under consideration are peripheral for Christian living then the person's moral unease must have priority. But if they are convinced that essential truths and loyalties are at stake his scruples must be overruled.

The case (b) involves the claim that principles are at stake which the individual holding them can reject only at the cost of rejecting herself. Again there are sets of moral obligations corresponding to the person who makes the claim and those who have to deal with it.

First, an individual has a duty to make sure that he really is entitled to claim that an opinion is a matter of conscience. We have to be on guard against the stubbornness which is a cover for mental laziness or the fear of having to undertake a large scale reorganisation of our beliefs. It is difficult to see how someone who holds a belief on a fairly slim balance of probability could be justified in making it a matter of conscience. According to the Confession, we have a duty not to hold conscientious opinions about issues which are 'contrary' to or 'beside' what the Word of God states. There is also a responsibility not to accept the easy option of 'an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience' (Confession XX.ii), which can be inspired by a 'guru' or peer group as much as by an authoritarian church. Doubtless, we must often rely on the skill and learning of others, but convictions of conscience must always include an essential component of personal decision. As we have seen, the satisfaction



an essential component of personal decision. As we have seen, the satisfaction that we have investigated the issues sufficiently is based on intuition which, for the Christian, will only be as good as his training in Godliness.

The claim that a certain point of view is one of conscience is more often than not accompanied by a significant challenge to those whose opinions differ. The doctor who states that, 'as a matter of conscience' he cannot perform abortions is committed to a way of working which may inconvenience or even conflict with the practice of other colleagues. Similarly, those within the church who 'as a matter of conscience' feel they can have no part in any procedure which results in the ordination of a woman are committed to action which challenges the practice of the rest of the church.

Since convictions of conscience impinge on the lives of others it would seem that we must require more than the mere claim that an opinion is held conscientiously. If we have a particular obligation to accommodate varieties of conscience we have a duty to satisfy ourselves that conscience claims are justified. For example, if we discovered that someone did not really understand the arguments involved, or had simply selected those that suited him we would be quite in order to doubt his right to claim the privilege of conscience. In short, we have a responsibility to require evidence of integrity from those whose convictions challenge our own fundamental views.

The practical consequences of conflicting conscientious convictions raise the question of how far those with contrary opinions can remain as part of a working consensus. For example, a unionist M.P. who acquires the firm conviction that the British presence in Northern Ireland is morally wrong will find that he and his party must soon part company. Within our own church, we would find it impossible to retain a minister who arrived at the conscientious belief that the administration of infant baptism is a grave error. In both of these cases, we have examples of conflicting conscience which must either change the consensus, break it up, or exclude the bearer of the conflicting conscience. Thus, the amount of accommodation I can allow without affecting the integrity of my own convictions is necessarily limited.

How, then do we deal with the person whose conscientious convictions are genuinely at odds with our own? Indeed if we are sure enough of our own doctrine and way of life, why should we respect him anyway? It would appear that the Westminster Fathers would have put him in jail, and a century before he would have been burned at the stake. Indeed, could anyone genuinely be honest in claiming radically different convictions from my own? Is a humanist,

at heart, he is an evil man? Or has he reached what for him is an honest, but for us a mistaken conclusion?

Peter Baelz argues that there are limits to what can be considered as a conscientious action. 'Some moral principles, such as the sanctity of life, are so fundamental that, if a person openly flouts them, he cannot have begun to reflect morally.. He is an evil man, not a non-conformist<sup>4</sup>'. I find it impossible to disagree with him, for the alternative seems to be respect for the conscience of Eichmann. But outside those limits are ranges of possible convictions held by individuals whose rational honesty it is impossible to judge. In the end, it is surely the personal nature of conscience that leads us to respect its general freedom. And that is because persons matter, each significant in his or her own right, created in the image of God with the privilege and responsibility to make those ultimate decisions that can be their's alone. It is because a person's fundamental convictions can never be coerced but only persuaded by argument and, in the end, changed by the grace of God that our Christian obligations include tolerance and respect.

### Notes

1. e.g C.A.Pierce, Conscience in the New Testament, (1955).
2. Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, (New York, Viking Press, 1963).
3. Works of Bishop Butler, ed. J.H.Bernard, Vol.1 (McMillan Press).
4. Peter Baelz, Ethics and Belief, (London, Sheldon Press), p.47.

R.A.Russell

## Book Reviews

Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989. pp. i-xvi, 1-336.

The stated aim of *Sowing the Gospel* is to "attempt to articulate one possible interpretation of the Gospel in all its parts in the light of its authorial audience" (p.53), that is, in light of the audience imagined by the author as the Gospel was being written. This is done by attempting to situate Mark, as a self-consciously constructed narrative, within the shared literary expectations and reading conventions of its time.

Tolbert suggests that the Gospel of Mark, as a particular genre of writing, belongs most nearly to the realm of popular literature, that is, "literature composed in such a way as to be accessible to a wide spectrum of society" (p.70), and that it displays clear and striking stylistic similarities to the ancient novel. These stylistic similarities would include such things as an episodic narrative pattern, the prominence of the journey motif, and the use of various mnemonic devices. However, for the purposes of this study, the most important of these stylistic features would be a form of character description which is illustrative and symbolic, not psychological - that is, which displays character types rather than individuals.

In light of this approach, then, Tolbert is able to uncover a rhetorical structure to the Gospel in which two important parables, that of the Sower and that of the Tenants, provided a key interpretative framework within which the rest of the Gospel can be more clearly understood. These two parables provide plot synopses at the beginning of each of the two major sections of the Gospel (Mk 1: 14-10:52 and Mk 11: 1-16:8), which then serve to enhance the accessibility of the whole story by informing the audience beforehand of what the story is about.

In the parable of the Sower, for example, Jesus comes from God to sow the word, and the four different types of ground on which the seed falls produce four kinds of response, which are then illustrated as the narrative unfolds. The most provocative part of this interpretations is that the disciples are clearly portrayed as "rocky ground", as people who receive the word with initial enthusiasm and endure for a time, but who fall away in the face of hardship or persecution. The audience is therefore encouraged neither to identify with them nor to emulate them.

The analysis of Mark which Mary Tolbert offers is thorough, insightful, and often persuasive. However, the strength of the book lies not only in the solid and consistent interpretation of the Gospel which is offered, but also in the way in which this reading of Mark opens up all kinds of #avenues for further



theological reflection, whether in the light of the rest of the NT canon, or in the context of the ongoing life of the Christian community. For example:

1. This reading of Mark produces a remarkably consistent view of faith, namely that it is the firm conviction, prior to the event, that something will take place. Therefore, faith in those who represent the "good earth" precedes healing, and miracles are not designed to create faith but are themselves the fruit of faith.
2. Again, in this interpretation, the necessity of suffering for Jesus and those who follow him is not divinely ordained, but is rather the result of the current dominance of "this adulterous and sinful generation". Mark, therefore, has no "theology of atonement", based on some notion of innocent sacrifice or reparation for the sins of humanity. Rather, Jesus' suffering and death are clearly understood as the inescapable result of challenging the authorities of "this generation" in order to clear the way for a broader sowing of the good news.
3. The language of election in Mark clearly functions in a descriptive rather than a prescriptive way. The narrative does not suggest that some are predestined to respond to the good news while others are not, but rather describes the range of human responses to the Gospel and reflects the fact that some do indeed reject the good news while others welcome it. In other words, the "elect" in some important sense elect themselves by their trusting response to the word. The concept of election therefore functions not in a deterministic way but as an invitation to fruitful discipleship directed at all who have ears to hear.

Tolbert states early on that "the model of interpretation and reading fundamental to this study insists that every reader participates in creating the meaning of the text in the process of interpreting it (p.55)." Her method, therefore, dovetails with the theological perspective which emerges from her literary-historical approach. The Gospel is seen as an ongoing "sowing of the seed", to which the audience is called to respond, either revealing themselves to be rocky ground, or by their continuing choices being transformed into good earth.

It is therefore perhaps no coincidence that the characteristics of Sowing the Gospel which most deserves to be acknowledged and honoured is Tolbert's deeply respectful attitude towards her readers. What her literary approach to the Gospel in theory assumes, namely that any worthwhile interpretation will emerge from a two-way conversation between text and audience, her own method embodies. Her approach and resulting interpretation of Mark are set out with a clarity and helpfulness which enable her readers to be full partners with her in her exploration. Undoubtedly such respect for the audience has helped to produce a book which is provocative in the best sense, inviting the reader on a journey

which engages both mind and imagination, and whose benefits are to be found not simply in reaching the stated goal but also in having travelled the road to get there.

Katherine P. Meyer.

Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel. A Study of John and the Old Testament*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991. pp.393. ISBN: 0-567-09583-0. £27.50.

The late Professor Hanson has written frequently on both John's Gospel and the Old Testament in the New Testament, and so it is particularly fitting that he should have produced this impressive volume on John and the Old Testament. It is a detailed, well-documented and carefully argued work which will no doubt have an influence on the ongoing debate on John's Gospel for many years to come.

Hanson's basic thesis could be summed up in his own words: "John is aware of an earlier historical tradition about Jesus which differs in certain important respects from his. He feels constrained by it at certain points even when it seems to conflict with his own. He has his own historical tradition, which appears to be inferior to that of the Synoptists, though now without some value. But he allows himself a very wide licence indeed in altering, enriching, transposing, and adding to his own tradition from his own resources, which were largely drawn from scripture as he understood it. He has therefore not provided us with a reliable historical account of Jesus." (318) Professor Hanson considers that John put forward a christology that he knew was more advanced than anything to be found in early tradition, but that he felt justified in doing that because he believed that such a christology had been prophesied in Scripture .. "John believed himself justified in going beyond the early tradition of Jesus because the scripture entitled him to do so." (342)

After a brief introduction entitled "The Problem Gospel", Professor Hanson in his second chapter delves into the substance of his thesis by examining the Old Testament background to the Gospel. In chapters 2 - 13 (inclusive) he surveys the whole book, chapter by chapter, pointing out every conceivable link with the Old Testament. This is, in my view, the most valuable section of the book, as it provides many very useful insights and many original ideas, which no doubt will be eagerly discussed in exegetical commentaries in the future. At times, however, Professor Hanson seems to go too far. Like all commentators, he seeks an explanation of the two day delay in John 11:5

between Jesus' hearing of his good friend Lazarus' grave sickness and his leaving to go to see him. He offers the promising suggestion that perhaps the fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy lies behind John's introduction of this delay. The Old Testament passage which Professor Hanson postulates, however, Job 14:6a in the LXX "stand back that he may rest" is hardly convincing, nor is his postulation that Job 14:12-15a (LXX) is echoed in John 11: 9-11. One need not agree with every sentence to appreciate the immense learning and research that are found in these chapters.

The concluding six chapters deal with Professor Hanson's conclusions concerning some of the perennial problems confronted by students of John's Gospel .... John's Use of the Old Testament, the relationship between the Early and the Risen Jesus, the Icon of Jesus, the question of the Historical Jesus, the purpose of the Gospel and finally the Fourth Gospel and the Church today. He gives a detailed assessment of recent (and in the case of Westcott not so recent) scholarship on these issues and argues his own position carefully and thoroughly. He is usually very fair to his academic opponents, but on occasions he seems to dismiss too quickly those with which he does not agree, especially if they have attempted, like Robinson, Smalley, Feuillet etc. to defend the substantial historicity of the Fourth Gospel. His attack on Feuillet, for example, where he reminds his readers that, "not unlike J. A. T Robinson, he accepts the genuineness of the Turin shroud" (p.315), seems to descend at times into polemic.

Professor Hanson's book is both stimulating and insightful. Johannine scholars will debate for many years to come his thesis that the author "was deploying the full resources of scripture to set out at length the full significance of Jesus for the church." Serious students of the Bible, however, will also find much of value in this book, as they learn to follow Professor Hanson's closing words of advice: "The Church today must use and value the Fourth Gospel, but it must use and value it for what it is and not for what it is not".

J. C. McCullough.

Ben Witherington, *The Christology of Jesus*, Fortress Press 1990. pp 310 + x.

What did Jesus think of himself, and of his relationships with God and man? The evidence from which Dr. Witherington deduces his answers to these questions is primarily indirect, rather than that which contains an explicit statement. So, he considers what is implied by the actions of Jesus, such as his calling of the disciples, and by his teaching on such matters as the Kingdom of



God; and the Son of Man.

The headings of the first four chapters indicate the course of the investigation: Methodological and Historical Considerations, Christology and the Relationships of Jesus, Christology and the Deeds of Jesus, Christology and the Words of Jesus.

Not everyone will interpret every piece of evidence exactly as it is interpreted here, but all will welcome the fruits of Witherington's wide reading in works of modern scholarship, and it is pleasing to find that earlier works such as those of Manson and Taylor have not been neglected.

The fifth and final chapter, Afterword and Conclusions, is very good. It is accepted that it would be anachronistic to apply to the records of the words and deeds of Jesus the categories of Trinitarian theology, but it is argued that the seeds of later Christological development are found in these records. "We find the Christology of Jesus chiefly in the way he distinguished himself from his close contemporaries because here we see the ways he stood out from the crowd, the ways in which he was unique. Fortunately, it is here that the lost widely accepted criterion for authenticity comes into play -the criterion of dissimilarity".

In the final chapter, Witherington lists thirteen matters which, he says, any theory of Jesus' view of himself 'must be adequate to explain'; Among the thirteen is the feeding of the five thousand. It seems reasonable to suppose that an 'adequate explanation' of this feeding would suggest an answer to the question of what really happened. Although the miracle is treated on pp.98-101, this question is never addressed.

There are some inaccuracies in the book. On p.138 we find, "normally only those who are disciples address Jesus as Kyrie in the Gospel tradition (and this is always the case in the First gospel)". But, at Matthew 8:2 a leper addresses Jesus as Kyrie, as does the Caananite woman at Matthew 15:22,25,27).

On p.73 we read in the account of the barren fig tree, "Here is the only example in the Gospels of an intentionally destructive miracle". But the commandments of Jesus to Simon in Luke 5, and to the disciples in John 21 to cast their nets were so that fish might be caught. It is possible, though improbable, that all of the fish caught in Luke 5 were thrown back into the sea and did not die, But, in John 21:10,11 some of the fish certainly died, and this had been the intention of Jesus.. It is also probable that, in the days of the evangelists, the death of about two hundred pigs, following the healing of the

Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5), was regarded as the necessary consequence of the permission given by Jesus for the unclean spirits to enter the pigs.

The deaths of the fish and the pigs may show Jesus in a more 'destructive' light than Witherington allows, but, on the other hand, there is nothing in the Gospels which seems to me to justify the statement on p.173 that Jesus, 'Even destroyed part of the temple!' The transliteration of Greek is inconsistent; sometimes long vowels are marked as such, and at other times they are not distinguished from short vowels. On the same line on p.201 we have egō (where the *omega* is distinguished from *omicron*) and ekballo where the *omega* is not so distinguished). On p.222 in addition to nepioi, in which the *eta* is not marked, we also have Jebelruf which should, presumably, be Jubelruf.

The most eye-catching of the errors of transliteration is the misrepresentation of eggiken as heggiken, which we find five times on pp.199,200.

There is an impressively full bibliography, but here too-there are errors : "Jesus and the Zealots; a Correction" *NTS* 17 (1970-71):453, and "The Origins of the Zealots" *NTS* 19 (1972/73)74-81, are both attributed to M. Smith: these articles were, however, by S.G.F. Brandon and H P Kingdom respectively.

V.Parkin

J. C. O'Neill, *The Bible's Authority: A Portrait Gallery of Thinkers from Leasing to Bultmann*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 1991. pp. 323.

J. M. Gordon, *Evangelical Spirituality from the Wesleys to John Stott*. London: SPCK. 1991. pp. 340. £12.99.

Here are two volumes with a similar ground plan; both deal with figures from the last two centuries; both give graphic accounts of these figures; both focus on their attitude to the Bible. However, the two volumes deal with persons and worlds of thought which rarely impinge and had little in common.

Prof. O'Neill of Edinburgh University has produced a book concerned with continental scholars and teachers; some of them were ordained pastors and all were immensely learned in the original languages of the Bible and in other disciplines. At their hands the Bible received the most searching analysis ever accorded to a work of literature. Many of their theories have perished, but Dr O'Neill holds that their outlook has influenced and marked out the course of all

subsequent study. Their picture of the strands woven into the books of the Old Testament is generally accepted; in the study of the New Testament, it is agreed that Mark is the earliest Gospel and was the framework used in the compilation of Matthew and Luke. Dr O'Neill holds that the interpretations of New Testament teaching by British scholars such as C. H. Dodd had been anticipated in the writings of these continental figures.

However, some of the figures in the gallery, as portrayed by Dr. O'Neill prove to be rather repulsive in their cavalier attitude to the Bible, in their egotism, and in the laudation of national might. Nietzsche's teaching that been the quarry from which many have drawn a justification of dictatorship. Harnack was basically concerned with himself rather than with God.

Taking the gallery as a whole, Dr O'Neill concludes that for all their abiding influence they attempted to present rational systems which tried to fit God into the prevalent rationalism of their time, and they thus missed the point that the Bible is the record of the revelation of God in Christ which stands in judgement on their rationalism. Therefore, there is need to recover the authority of God which is the only basis of the Bible's authority. This might seem to readers to be the type of criticism which would have been lodged by Barth, but Barth is in the gallery and is judged by Dr. O'Neill to be infected with the weaknesses of the others.

Dr O'Neill challenges readers to show if he has omitted or misrepresented any relevant aspect of the teaching of those in his gallery. I have not sufficient acquaintance with their writings to take up the challenge but I doubt if any will be able to do so. In his introduction Dr O'Neill says his study has led him to conclude that the Bible's authority has been strengthened and made more widely accepted. He admits that he can only hint at that theme, but it would had helped if he had defined more fully his view of that authority, and it is permissible to ask if this strengthened authority has come about because of, or in spite of, the writings of the figures in his gallery.

This is an informative, learned and refreshing book such as I would expect from a former colleague on the staff of Westminster College, Cambridge.

The second volume is by James Gordon, the minister of Crown Terrace Baptist Church, Aberdeen. It is exciting to read and gives fine pictures of great communicators of the Gospel from the Wesleys to John Stott, all of whom have been accorded the label of "Evangelical". All were diligent readers and students of the bible; they made it the basis of their teaching. However, they were a



company with a wide variety of gifts and outlooks. There are those like Simeon and Stott with a great loyalty to the Church of England and its liturgy, while others like Spurgeon and Moody were independent in outlook and stressed the importance of prayer immediately moved by the Spirit of God. There are those like Bishop Handley Moule who stressed the importance and possibility of personal holiness as taught in the Keswick Movement, while others like Bishop J. C. Ryle stressed the Christian's continual struggle with sin and the need for continual repentance as long as life lasts. There are those like Alexander Whyte who defended the right and duty to take seriously the results of biblical criticism such as is dealt with in Dr O'Neill's book, while others like Martyn Lloyd Jones saw such study as a threat to their view of biblical infallibility. Some supported the methods of evangelism used by Billy Graham while others like Martyn Lloyd Jones stressed that God should be allowed to call his elect in his own time in response to sound biblical and theological teaching and preaching. Some tended to limit their reading to the tomes of the weighty Puritan divines as the source of sound doctrine while others like Whyte ranged through the medieval mystics, Anglican divines such as Hooker, Jeremy Taylor and William Law, and more modern writers such as Newman. There are those noted for vivid oratory such as George Whitefield and Samuel Chadwick while others like P. T. Forsyth were masters of polished prose and striking epigrams. Some like John Newton had come to faith after a wayward course of life but others like the Wesleys came to deep faith after years of disciplined Christian life. Horatius Bonar and Robert Murray McCheyne were steeped in the faith from their earliest years. There are also the contrasting figures of Frances Ridley Havergal and Hannah More. All these and more are clearly presented in this book.

Amid such a variety of background, talent, training and experience, is there any common pattern by which Evangelical can be identified? All had a love for the Bible; all had a sense of the glory, righteousness and mercy of God; all had a deep indebtedness to Jesus Christ who had come with the Good News of the Kingdom, who had by his perfect sacrifice on the Cross made a full atonement for their sins, who in his risen life had claimed them for his own and called them to live as his disciples.

This book gives a fine survey of the range of belief and practice found these evangelical Christians; it also looks at the strengths and weaknesses of this tradition. It claims that this tradition at its best does not claim to be the exclusive form of Christian spirituality but it can claim to have been and to continue to be a vital contribution to that total spirituality. The boundaries between evangelical and catholic spirituality have never been a Berlin wall. Alexander Whyte was at home in catholic spirituality, firm evangelical Presbyterian as he was. It may be

noted that a later successor of Handley Moule in the bishopric of Durham, Michael Ramsey, was counted as belonging to the catholic wing of the Church of England, yet he was fully at home addressing an Evangelical Assembly and he had on his desk a photograph of Billy Graham. I can also mention that I have examined for a higher degree a fine thesis on the catholic strand in the teaching of John Wesley.

This book is a pleasure to read; it will inform, disturb and challenge.

R. Buick Knox.

Jurgen Moltmann, *History and the Triune God*, (SCM Press, 1991, London). pp.204, £12.95.

Increasingly the doctrine of the Trinity is returning to the agenda of theological discussion. The notion of the economic Trinity is being tempered by the concept of perichoresis, the interpenetration of the persons of the Trinity. Moltmann began his contribution to the discussion with The Trinity and the Kingdom of God (1980) further developing the themes of perichoresis and the trinitarian relationship to creation in God in Creation (1985). In this book, History and the Triune God, Moltmann claims to complete his trilogy on the Trinity.

The book is divided into three sections of which the first two directly address the central theme of the book, the Trinity. Each section consists of articles written over the ten years since Trinity and the Kingdom of God and they are divided into two long and one short sections. The book suffers from its nature as a collection of articles lacking the sustained argument of the earlier works. Since the book consists of articles these often duplicate without elaborating the central concerns.

The first section consists of a series of articles on specific themes, theodicy, sexism, justice etc. in which Moltmann examines the role of the Trinity and the nature of perichoresis. The articles address important issues and are firmly rooted in the Reformed tradition but because of their brevity often leave one longing for a more extended treatment of each issue.

The second section of the book consists of a series of "responses". In these articles Moltmann responds to Barth, Rahner as himself and as he would have wished to address these theologians defending his own position. The "response"



wished to address these theologians defending his own position. The "response" which was, in my opinion, the most valuable was Moltmann's reconstruction of a debate between Thomas Aquinas and Joachim of Fiore on the nature of Christian hope.

The third section is a brief theological autobiography which Moltmann was asked to write for a German magazine and, as Moltmann himself notes, is a somewhat confusing exercise. The short article does not convey the same personal involvement of theology and life that the earlier Experiences of God achieves.

In many ways this remains a fragmented book. It does however prove an important addition to the debate concerning the nature of the Trinity and because of its nature, as articles, can be read in an unsystematic manner without losing the freshness with which Moltmann sees the Trinity.

D J Templeton

*THE PASTOR: Readings from the Patristic Period*, edited by Philip L. Culbertson & Arthur B. Shippee. Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis. 1990. pp. xiii - 237.

This work could hardly be more timely. It appears just as experienced observers detect a "sea change" in pastoral studies. It is realized that there has developed 'a kind of amnesia about the Christian tradition which needs to be rectified'. The past generation of pastoral care has found its illumination' in the Scriptures and the Human Sciences - "more reference to Jeremiah, John and Jung than to Jerome", as our editors put it. The rich resources of the five centuries following the New Testament have been largely ignored.

Historians dipped into that formative period to trace how doctrines of the creeds were propounded and defended against threatening heresies. These were not just writers or theorists. Indeed, as our editors claim, "if we were to examine their job descriptions, if we could peruse their time sheets, we would find something different, they spent most of their time being pastors." They "did theology, as theology should be done then and now, in order to build up the life of the people of God, as a community and as individuals, and that provides the secure basis for pastoral work.

The study of these texts is made easy by a general introduction, followed by an introduction to each group of texts and authors, giving dates, locations,



The whole period, although removed by fifteen centuries and thousands of miles from our western, modern scene, is found to have a remarkable relevance and significance for us. We find many of the same reasons for joy and anger, the same elations and disappointments, the same rewards and struggles that face those exercising ministry now. Tradition is important because of that continuity of condition.

Only a few features as set out below may illustrate the point: \* qualifications and suitability for office must be sifted with caution. Self-assured sense of inner calling needs proof and public support;

\*in the ongoing evolution of ecclesiastical structures and offices these fathers did not question the essential oneness of God's people and their diversity in things non-essential; discipline in matters of family and sex were of much concern, but continence applied to more than sex; it was as important in matters of food, drink and lifestyle;

\* reimbursing pastors had to be ensured and with it guarding against temptations to take financial advantage of their ability or high office to participate in lucrative business transactions;

\*those with more wealth had clearly stated obligations to the weak, poor and deprived;

\*secular and political forces had to be resisted, but on well thought out theological bases; as bishops and priests were often of higher social class and education they knew from experience how church and state might best relate to each other;

\*preaching ought to have more solid content and less dramatic form, with more variety; hearers should be educated for listening in order to understand;

\*the age-old problem of innocent suffering and the source of evil was tackled repeatedly, so was depression of spirit;

\*what may surprise readers is the "modern" flavour of such matters as: confidentiality, non-judgmental attitudes, pastoral listening and treatment of the individual without generalizing, self-knowledge as the secret of growth and maturity, non-verbal communication and body language.

This selection of texts, comprehensive as it is, does not claim

individual without generalizing, self-knowledge as the secret of growth and maturity, non-verbal communication and body language.

This selection of texts, comprehensive as it is, does not claim to be complete. It had to be subjective. However, it supplies all that is necessary to restore the balance in the "trialogue" of Scripture, Reason and Tradition. While one realizes that providing an index of subjects would have been a formidable undertaking, such a further tool for reference would have enhanced the value of this work. Not the least merit of this book is the light it sheds on how Scripture was interpreted and applied over the varying circumstances of such a long period of time. We must not turn to these pages for "proof texts", any more than we ought to use the Bible in that way. Yet like the Bible, this selection will prove its own interpreter and illuminate many areas of contemporary pastoral practice.

James R. Boyd.